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LOQUARNE LINGUIS HOMINUM AUT DISERTORUM? (Krauss)

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LOQUARNE LINGUIS HOMINUM AUT DISERTORUM?*

The mass of literature, good and bad, that has appeared in recent years purporting to identify the basic faults of modern society and to suggest remedies for their correction is too large for most persons, except the specialists in the several fields of inquiry, to study and digest thoroughly. Yet, the alert and reflective participant in the *Sturm und Drang* of contemporary world affairs is more than superficially aware that the social structure is tottering and threatens to fall, unless specific relief is soon forthcoming.

Scapegoats on whom to fasten the blame for this dismaying prospect can conveniently be found. The four black sheep who, however, are most often singled out for sacrifice on the altar of the public conscience are the preacher, the politician, the industrialist, and the physical scientist. The first of these usually receives the lightest censure, since today his *flamina e pulpito* have little effect beyond the circle of the faithful few. Most of the blame for our sorry plight is attached, therefore, in varying degrees to the other three: to the politician who seeks to restrain the industrialist; to the industrialist who maneuvers to circumvent the politician; and to the physical scientist who proceeds with his research blithely indifferent, in the majority of cases, to the impact that his discoveries may have

* This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, New York City, May 18, 1946.

on the political and the industrial order.

From the conflict and the lack of coordinated effort among these three modern giants arises the tension within the structure of Western civilization that may bring it down in ruin. The strain is caused mostly by the shudderings, which already are ominous, of an arachnid industrial economy which is nurtured on the formulae effected by scientific research, which is abetted on the one hand and coerced on the other by uncompromising political ideologists, and which only grudgingly concedes a minimum of consideration to the mental, moral and physical improvement of the millions of diversified workers milling about in its enveloping web.

Deliverance from this treadmill which brings the aging worker ever closer to the center of spiritual strangulation is now at hand. This, we are told, is to be the Century of the Common Man. Whether promulgated by starry-eyed visionaries or by self-seeking demagogues, this alluring phrase seems to signify that in our time the distinctions between the classes and the masses will begin to disappear through specific legislation. The rich will no longer have the opportunity to exploit the poor, the employer will have a minimum of control over his employees, traditional social barriers will be leveled, politics will be dominated by the will of the ignorant many rather than by the wealth of the corrupt few, the arts will be suited to the simple tastes of the majority, and educational institutions (including colleges and universities) will concentrate their

services on the vocational training of millions of human replacements in the vast politico-industrial scheme rather than on the professional education of the talented few. The *artes liberales*, which are the keystone of American democracy, will be placed, if they are permitted to continue to operate as a functional unit, far out on the periphery of the educational orbit. By thus penalizing wealth, discrediting taste, and emasculating education, the Common Man is visualized as coming into his own at last. In this process of determined cultural degeneration by bureaucratic fiat, all things golden will be degraded. Through a dictatorship of the proletariat *aurea aetas mox fiet saeculum plumbeum*.

I have neither the time nor the inclination to inject into this paper the most obvious arguments that can be advanced for or against the contention that this radical change in our cultural orientation is necessitated by conditions that are peculiar to the scientific-industrial age in which we live. But, whether the thesis be basically fallacious or not, it should be recognized as the major cause of the persistent pressure for sweeping changes in our educational curricula. The over-all emphasis in contemporary American education is on the 'basic': basic curricula, basic courses in the several curricula, and basic subject matter in the several courses. Even the treatment of the subject matter must be basic, for a course is thought not to be properly presented, if the teacher allows his instruction to range inquisitorily beyond the basic facts. This delimitation of educational materials and methods has the negative effect of coddling the multitude of incompetent or indifferent students and of coercing to the point of tedium the relatively small group of gifted students whose development should be the chief concern of an educational system that pretends to serve the best interests of the State.

Few, indeed, are the institutions of higher learning that today do not pride themselves on the progress they have made in curricular revision by weeding out 'unessential' courses and by 'reorientating' traditionally respectable courses. Few, also, are the departments that today do not devote the greater part of their time to instruc-

tion in basic (that is, Freshman or sub-Freshman) courses. My primary purpose, however, is not to satirize this farcical perversion of the honorable objectives of higher education but to examine what effect the calculated demand for the basic has had on the content and the teaching of Latin and, more particularly, to submit proposals by which this demagogic challenge may be met.

Classicists, as you well know, have the unenviable reputation in academic circles of being stick-in-the-muds. Our more 'progressivistic' colleagues accuse us of refusing with an equal degree of stubbornness and of stupidity to recognize that 'the world has changed' and that we must change with it, if we wish to survive professionally. Most of us strongly deny this charge of academic somnolence by asserting that the texts and the methods which we now use with our classes reflect radical departures from the materials and the procedures that were current twenty-five, thirty, and forty years ago. We argue that Latinists have been quite as much alive as any academic group to the practical need of accommodating their subject to the profound changes that have occurred in the schools through the marked increase in student enrolment, the variegated expansion of the curriculum, and the resultant thinning out of course content.

Some of us point with a degree of personal gratification to the fact that the Subjunctive Mood is now put off until the Second Term or even the Second Year; that the Gerund, Gerundive, and Supine are not stressed; that the Periphrastic Conjugations are not taught at all; that only the first three declensions are emphasized, and only the consonant stems in the Third Declension; that the routine memorization of paradigms is acknowledged to be pedagogically unsound; that the rules of syntax are taught functionally rather than recitatively; that extensive exercises in Latin composition are no longer required; that the traditional sequence of the formerly standard authors in the high school course is no longer observed, and that these authors, Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil, have been replaced in many schools by attractively illus-

trated collections of excerpts from Latin prose and poetry; that the texts include much material in English, as well as in Latin, concerning Roman social and political institutions; that the relationship of English to Latin is clearly and amply set forth in the vocabulary exercises; and that our major objective is to train the student to *read* Latin with a competent degree of facility and understanding.

When we have concluded with the recitation of this imposing list of the changes that have been made in the materials and the presentation of Latin to the contemporary student, our accuser, swelling (perhaps against his will) with nostalgic pride, may startle us with the keen observation: 'But, you really are teaching less Latin in two years than I was required to learn in one!' He may also point out with devastating validity that one need not enroll in Latin courses to learn about Roman institutions, since a wealth of excellent material dealing with this important field is readily accessible in handbook form to all who can read English. Thus, whereas we may have hoped by such a train of arguments to convince our sterner critics that we Latinists, too, are really on our toes or, to use a more significant phrase, that we are wisely trimming our sails to catch the breeze of student interest and thereby of administrative support, we frequently may be dismayed to discover that we have succeeded only in providing them with more reasons for believing that Latin continues to be ill suited to the curriculum of the modern school.

In desperation, some of us take refuge in the hope that eventually the results of so-called progressive education will prove so inadequate that of necessity a trend will begin back to the disciplinary subjects that do not merely inform but also train students to think clearly and logically. Such wishful thinking, however, is futile as long as industry dominates and determines our national economy. On the treadmill of a system that is founded on mass production, there will be small demand for minds, even on the college level, that are disciplined to examine, to correlate, and to interpret numerous interdependent details.

In what direction, then, can we turn to find a more valid and convincing defense of the subject to which we are professionally dedicated? Or, putting the question in the phraseology of the educational psychologist, how can we justify our work on the basis of student interest and demand? Certainly, we must admit that a large section of Latin teachers, both in our secondary schools and our colleges, still restrict their classes to the textual materials and the methods that were typical several decades ago. They do not believe (and in many instances wisely so), that the newer materials and methods are an improvement over the older. They are more reluctant than their colleagues in many other fields to become progressive merely by adopting changes, irrespective of necessity or desirability.

What we wish to emphasize, however, is that these teachers persist in directing their instruction toward the same objective that was published about a quarter of a century ago as the standard goal for Latin studies in the secondary schools and colleges, namely, to train students to *read* Latin. It is rather surprising that this goal was fixed at a time when it already was becoming apparent that all language studies, including English, were being de-emphasized, particularly with respect to formal instruction in grammar and syntax. This warning which was clearly sounded on every side by the makers of the 'modern curriculum' was, it would seem, either completely ignored or stubbornly challenged. Since the intensive study of grammar and syntax is the *sine qua non* for the *reading* of any foreign language by an individual to whom the language is orally foreign, the collective determination of Latin teachers to train their students primarily to *read* Latin was tantamount to a declaration that most of their instruction would be confined to Latin grammar and syntax. What is not surprising, therefore, is that in an educational system that has 'progressively' substituted education *en masse* for education of the masses, and which increasingly operates on the principle of *non multum sed multa*, this intensive specialization within a specialized field is denounced as 'impractical' and 'unessential'. *Quod nobis aliter*

videtur, sophistarum iam dudum non refert.

Now, it seems to me, that in our country the teachers of the foreign languages have steadily moved farther and farther away from what should be the primary objective of all language study. For reasons that are not too difficult to uncover, we Latinists, however, even more than the teachers of the modern languages, have become so devoted to the printed page, so involved in the niceties of grammar and syntax, so delimited by the standards set up by the masters of literary expression, so habituated to using only the vocabulary that is incident to the comparatively few authors who figure in the program, and so blindly insistent that students be satisfied with this mute, indirect contact with language that we have devitalized our subject by having ignored the very nature of language.

We seem, indeed, to have lost sight of the fact that language in reality is sound effected by the organs of speech and addressed to the mind through the ear, and that a pattern of linguistic symbols impressed on the page and addressed to the mind through the eye is at best only an incomplete and inadequate substitute for the living words. Just as music exists independently of musical notation, so language exists independently of any set of symbols that may arbitrarily be devised for its transcription. Many men sing who cannot read a note of music; many men speak who cannot read or write. In both instances, the notation is artificial, the action alone is real and alive.

Despite these facts, most of our Latin classes are concerned almost exclusively with the reading of Latin and only incidentally, if at all, with the speaking of Latin. In short, we continually work away from rather than in the direction of the language. I wish to observe here that exercises in Latin pronunciation are not to be confused with exercises in the oral use of Latin for the communication of thought. Strangely enough, moreover, we seem not to think it peculiar that in this procedure we employ and require our students to employ spoken English to interpret the page of printed Latin. Herein there is a fundamental psychological inconsistency in

that we ask our students to identify the living, audible speech of the one language, English, with the lifeless, mute, symbolic representation of the other language, Latin. This inconsistency, I believe, is chiefly responsible for the difficulty which students experience in attempting to retain the meanings of Latin words and in trying to develop a feeling for the idiom of the Latin language. Even in the instance of classes in the modern languages, where the incentive obviously is greater for practical reasons than it is in the case of Latin, reading customarily takes precedence over speaking the languages.

In addition, what little opportunity we may give to our students to compose themes in Latin usually is restricted to subjects that are of small interest to them or wholly foreign to their experience. As a result, the vocabulary, the forms and the syntax which we permit them to employ are almost of necessity delimited to the text which they happen to be reading. Exercises in the imitation of fundamental factors are, I concede, indispensable in advanced, as well as in elementary, courses. Yet, imitation that is severely restrictive, as in the case of most of the work in Latin composition, and that does not early and continually admit of and stimulate invention and creation in the individual student is mental drudgery, if not actually mental slavery. In short, even in the writing of Latin, the student is forced to relate his efforts directly to the author whom he is reading or is about to read.

This almost total emphasis on reading is, I believe, the chief reason why foreign language studies progress so poorly in the typical American classroom. Not until the organs of speech become actively engaged in the articulation of the sounds of colloquial words and phrases of a foreign language does that language make a deep and significant recording on the mind of the student. The stimulation which the organs of speech experience at the initial stage of translating thought into sound, the peculiar effort involved in the articulation of individual words and groups of words, and the subconscious, reflective reaction induced by the resultant sounds: these are the interdependent physical and psychologi-

cal factors in the development of the infant's ability to speak and to associate meaning with sound.

Similarly, the student of a foreign language who does not hear the language spoken in an elementary and colloquial manner and who is not repeatedly prompted to articulate words and phrases that are new and strange to him will not learn to speak the language. Unless he reads widely and intensively in the language, which qualification comparatively few students of Latin ever meet, so that ultimately a large section of the vocabulary and numerous idiomatic phrases become firmly rooted in his mind and participate in his thinking, he cannot be said to have developed much more than a grammatical acquaintance with the language. Since he does not use the language naturally, that is, orally, for the expression of his thoughts, he can neither readily nor fully comprehend the meanings of the simplest words and phrases on the printed page. His contact with the language, therefore, remains distinctly indirect, since his native language always intervenes as the indispensable intermediary.

Little wonder, then, that most Latin students cannot readily think of the words that are necessary for the phrasing of even the simplest Latin sentences, even though they may have read Latin for many years. Little wonder, too, that the severest critics of the study of Latin argue with much justification that we teachers of Latin insist at every stage on such a high degree of perfection in the use of the Latin forms and rules and on such high literary standards of idiomatic phraseology that we discourage the student from using the language as the vehicle of simple, familiar, everyday thought. The enrolment in Latin is declining and will continue to decline, since fewer and fewer students today can be persuaded that it is worth their time and effort to develop a passing ability to *read* the Latin masters, especially since these are available in translations. This tendency can be arrested and reversed, I believe, only if the student is taught to use Latin as a language, that is, to speak it and to write it, as well as to read it. A passing

ability to speak and to write Latin will be a natural incentive and great aid to the reading of Latin. This practical approach will provide a much needed justification of the study of Latin on the ground of that utility which is the key-stone of contemporary educational programs.

From these arguments I would not have you get the impression that I am an embittered apostate or a ruthless iconoclast bent on smashing the ancient idols of grammar and syntax and on substituting for the care, precision, and orderliness that are the outstanding characteristics of Latin expression the indifference, inexactness, and confusion that are the traits of the lazy, undisciplined, and uncultured mind. Nor am I even remotely suggesting that the Latin student be deprived of first-hand contact with those writers who are the best representatives of excellence in Latin letters. Their chefs-d'oeuvre are monuments of literary expression which have endured for the instruction and the inspiration of all who have learned to appreciate their merits. The Latin belles-lettres, moreover, are collectively the most reliable index of the temperament, moral consciousness, and intellectual achievements of that civilization from which the culture of Europe and of America branch and stem. As long as our culture remains vigorous, Latin literature will have to be perused, studied, and interpreted for the significant comparisons and contrasts that it best can provide between man's ancient and modern efforts to create in the West a world of law and order in all departments of human interest and activity.

But I do wish to submit the proposition that the future of the study of the Latin language in our schools and colleges depends on a specific modification, especially in the elementary courses, of the materials and the methods that now are used almost universally. The need for this modification has been recognized by a few Latinists in this country and abroad not only recently but also at various times during the past forty years. Complacent adherence to traditional practices, none the less, balked their efforts to introduce this change, since the urgency for change did not seem to be immediate or insistent. The pres-

sure for this very modification of our instruction is, however, very real today, not only because of the continued decline in Latin enrolments in many, if not all, parts of the country but also because of a novel, determined experiment in the teaching of foreign languages which was conducted on a large scale. I refer, of course, to the foreign language programs which the Army and the Navy pursued during the war just past in training selected groups of their forces to converse in and to comprehend through the ear one or another of many foreign tongues on the level of ideas incident to the environment and the situations in which these languages would severally be employed.

Through the information given to me by friends, both teachers and students, who participated in these programs, I am fully conscious of the considerable diversity of opinion regarding the degree of success attained by these methods. The exposure of the students many hours weekly to the sounds of a foreign language in the speech of the informant who addressed and conversed with them in that language and the constant prompting of the students to participate actively in the exchange of conversation was a wise, although not novel, recognition of the fact that these are the most direct and effective ways of freeing the individual from the restraining influences of his native tongue, of training his organs of speech to articulate new sounds, and of stimulating in him comprehension of the thoughts that are implicit in the new sound patterns. Despite the limitations of time and of environment, the programs afforded somewhat the same initial, linguistic experiences that are encountered by the novice who is in a foreign country and is studiously attempting to become conversant with the everyday language of that country as quickly as possible. And, just as the *tiro peregrinans* more rapidly improves his facility to speak the foreign tongue by studying its basic grammar and syntax and by supplementing what he hears spoken around him with readings in the daily press and in more refined literature, so, too, the foreign language programs of the Armed Services directed the student's attention to studies

in grammar and to reading. The weakness of these programs, in so far as I have been able to discover, occurred in those instances in which too little recognition was given to these visual aids in the learning of a foreign language.

It seems to be the consensus of opinion that these programs were neither a howling success nor a complete failure. Since the purposes for which the Army and the Navy were conducting them were related almost wholly to the prosecution of the war, and since, in some instances at least, the informants themselves were not too well acquainted either with the grammatical aspects of their own speech or with the techniques by which these could best be addressed to the American student, the results of the programs should not in all fairness be evaluated *in toto*. The main significance, I believe, that this vast experiment has for the teachers of foreign languages is that it demonstrated how much more quickly a student can begin to use a foreign language through the exercise of the organs of speech and the ear than by the traditional academic practice of reading his way into the language. Although at the outset he unwittingly commits numerous blunders in the forms and the syntax of the language and cannot analyze the idiomatic details of the complicated patterns of phraseology that occur frequently in colloquial speech, none the less he succeeds, largely by oral imitation, in acquiring a feeling for the application and the suitability of certain words to certain situations and phenomena more quickly than does the student whose interpretation of the same words on a printed page depends almost entirely on their grammatical dissection. Doubtless, a student who is thoroughly familiar with the grammatical materials and processes of one highly inflected language can learn to speak another highly inflected language with more facility and understanding than a student who lacks this equipment. Yet, even with this knowledge, he will not learn to speak it nearly as quickly as the latter student, if he confines his study of the language largely to reading it. In short, one must practice the speaking of a foreign language, not only in order that one may speak it with

increasing fluency but also in order that one may acquire the most intimate feeling for it.

(To be continued)

ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES

Prepared under the supervision of Professor Charles T. Murphy of Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

LINGUISTICS. GRAMMAR. METRICS.

CHANTRINE, P. *Le Rôle et la Valeur de ἐν dans la Composition.* This preposition originally used with dative for place where, or with accusative for place to which; latter usage largely replaced by εἰς with verbs of motion; analysis of compounds of these two prepositions indicates that the compounds with the former are far commoner and earlier; in compounds with the former, where root involves the concept of motion, the usage is survival of earlier practice rather than vagary of syntax. Where parallel compounds occur, those with the former preposition are, in general, earlier; the former prefix tends to be used where meaning is figurative or abstract, the latter for technical or special purposes. Modern Greek also retains the former prefix with old words, in spite of its disappearance as a preposition.

RPh 16 (1942) 115-25

(Taylor)

DES PLACES, ÉDOUARD. *L'Équivalence κεράννυμαι-temperari.* Cicero's translation of two phrases of Plato: in *Orator* 41, translating *Phaedrus* 278 E 10-279 B 1, direct translation of κεκράσθαι avoided by paraphrase; in *Tusc. Disp.* 5.35.101, however, translating from 7th *Epistle*, word rendered by moderari; original meaning of two words was the same.

RPh 16 (1942) 143-5

(Taylor)

ERNOUT, A. *Infinitif Grec et Géronatif Latin.* Greek infinitive uninflexed, often indeterminate as to voice; survey of its range in Homer and wide use later with article as substantive. Latin forms, in contrast with Greek, heterogeneous in origin; role of supine increasingly limited, a survival rather than a living form, and cases of verbal noun supplied by gerundive. Analysis of genitive of infinitive in Greek and of genitive of Latin gerundive, revealing parallels in early wide use of each, especially of vaguely-felt genitive of object concerned. Very range and vagueness in both languages led to replacement by more definite constructions. Development of usage in Greek and Latin largely independent of each other, parallels accidental and due to independent causes in both languages.

RPh 19 (1945) 93-115

(Taylor)

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES SUMMER SESSION, JULY-AUGUST, 1947

The Academy takes pleasure in announcing the resumption of the Summer Sessions of the School of Classical Studies under the direction of Professor Henry T. Rowell. A comprehensive course in Roman civilization from the earliest times to the reign of Constantine will be given, based on the study at first hand of existing monuments in and about Rome. The course will begin during the first ten days of July and extend for six weeks. Precise dates will be established later to correspond with shipping schedules.

Accommodations and board will be furnished in Academy buildings at a nominal charge. Arrangements have been made for transportation to Horace's Sabine farm, Tivoli, Ostia and other points of historical and archaeological interest in Latium. Museums are now functioning on regular schedules, and the many new archaeological discoveries made during the war years are open to inspection and will be included in the course. These circumstances and arrangements will make the 1947 Session particularly complete and profitable.

Total basic expenses including tuition, accommodations, board and transportation to and from Italy may be estimated at \$725.00. A limited amount of scholarship assistance is available and application should be made to the New York office before April 25th. Requests for details should be addressed to:

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Executive Secretary
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